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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the effects of implementing the Ohio policy of permitting credit-deficient students to enroll in two-year vocational education job training programs. At issue were the perceived benefits to 16-year-old students permitted to enroll in two-year vocational job training programs, even though the students have not earned the required number of credits for junior class standing. A survey revealed that 77 percent of responding districts enrolled credit-deficient students; some other districts were accepting these students on a limited basis; and others were rethinking their policy as a result of problems associated with declining enrollment. Some of the philosophies and methods used by school districts to deal with the issue of enrolling credit-deficient students in job training programs included a transitional program, alternative schools, individualized programming, adult basic education, additional assistance for special needs students, special job training programs, flexible junior class status, and three-year programs. Barriers to enrollment in vocational education classes were also identified. Two categories of recommendations were made--short-range ones to provide important adjustments in implementing vocational education programs and long-range ones to eliminate barriers to enrollment in secondary vocational education job training programs. (YLB)

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Ohio Council on Vocational Education
1988

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Ohio Council on Vocational Education—FY 88

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FOREWORD

Vocational education has played a central role in the success of school districts in meeting the challenge to educate all children and youth. However, the challenge remains unfulfilled. Despite the enormous gains made in reducing the drop-out rate, too many teenagers are still leaving school without a diploma or marketable skills. These young people are not confined to those who are less able; they are distributed across the full spectrum of academic ability. Vocational education has the potential to help all of them.

Once a plateau was reached in the war on dropouts -- about ten years ago -- educators found it necessary to become more analytical in their approach to serving all children and youth.

One of the groups requiring further analysis is referred to as "credit-deficient" high school students. The Ohio Council on Vocational Education (OCOVE) accepted responsibility for contributing to a deeper understanding of such students by commissioning this research study, "Serving Credit-Deficient High School Students Through Vocational Education." OCOVE engaged David B. Martin, the founding Superintendent of Eastland Joint Vocational School and Executive Vice President Emeritus of the Ohio School Boards Association, to conduct the study and prepare this report.

The absence of a generally applicable standard of what constitutes 11th grade standing in Ohio high schools made Mr. Martin's assignment difficult. This was especially signficant to this study since eligibility to enroll in Ohio's multiplicity of job training programs depends on having attained 11th-grade standing. For the purposes of this study, a credit-deficient student was defined as one who is so lacking in credits that substantial course work would be necessary outside the school day or school year before the student could meet graduation requirements.

It is to Mr. Martin's credit that he was able to develop this functional definition from his wide-ranging interviews and compile a report with such extensive findings, instructive conclusions, and useful recommendations. The study was strengthened when it became apparent that it should deal, as well, with barriers to enrollment in vocational programs.

The Council commends the resourceful boards of education and school leaders throughout Ohio who are serving credit-deficient students through vocational education. They have provided a strong base from which to plan the next round of initiatives to serve these students.

Joseph L. Davis
Dr. Joseph L. Davis
Executive Director

Mary E. Purcell
Mary E. Purcell
Chairperson

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was centered on credit-deficient students; that is, students who are at least 16 years old, but lack the number of course credits required for 11th-grade standing in their local schools. The study was guided by the following purposes: (1) to determine the effects of enrolling such students in two-year vocational education job training programs; (2) to identify alternative plans for dealing with such students who are interested in pursuing vocational education; (3) to identify barriers that prevent such students from enrolling in job training courses; and (4) to draw conclusions and offer recommendations that could help resolve the issues and problems that surfaced during the course of the study.

A survey of all Vocational Education Planning Districts revealed that 77% of the responding districts enroll credit-deficient students as a matter of policy. Some of the other districts are accepting these students on a limited basis. Still others are rethinking their policy as a result of problems associated with declining enrollment.

This study describes a variety of methods and philosophies used by various districts to deal with the issue of credit-deficient students as it relates to enrollment in job training programs. Some vocational educators have been highly creative in dealing with this issue. Others are asking for greater flexibility in establishing and funding new and different types of programs.

In a separate but closely related matter, this study attempts to identify and substantiate the barriers that prevent students, both credit-deficient and fully eligible, from enrolling in vocational education courses.

Finally, conclusions are stated and recommendations are offered to help clarify and give direction to the problems associated with the critical task of attracting and enrolling students in vocational education programs.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

On September 30, 1981, the Division of Vocational and Career Education, Ohio Department of Education, adopted the following policy: "Any student who has reached full Junior level or the age of 16 by October 15 is eligible to enroll in vocational education training programs." [Emphasis added.]

This policy, although not disseminated on a state-wide basis, apparently formalized the practice of permitting students who are at least 16 years of age with less than 11th-grade class standing to enroll in two-year vocational education job training programs. [It should be noted that not all vocational students are enrolled in job training programs. For example, Work Experience Career Exploration Programs (WECEP) are designed for "drop-out prone" youth below the age of 16. Also, Vocational Home Economics Homemaking emphasizes the responsibilities involved in establishing a home for the person who may work outside the home.]

The purpose of this study was to attempt to determine the effects of implementing the policy cited above. At issue were the perceived benefits to 16-year-old students who are permitted to enroll in two-year vocational job training programs, excluding Occupational Work Experience (OWE) programs, even though the students have not earned the required number of credits for junior class standing. OWE programs were not included because they are designed specifically for 16-to-21-year-old academic underachievers with limited interest in learning.

Some educators believe that permitting disinterested students and those who are less able academically to enroll in job training programs will help keep them in school to acquire a saleable skill. Others feel that implementation of the policy opens the way to "dump" the less able or problem students into vocational education, thus overburdening vocational programs. Concerns have also been expressed about the student who completes job training without having qualified for graduation.

While this study concentrated on credit-deficient students who are permitted to enroll in job training programs, it was deemed advisable to meet with officials of districts that have decided not to implement the policy. Furthermore, a decision was made to expand the study in order to identify the perceived "barriers" that prevent eligible students (age 16 with 11th-grade status) from enrolling in vocational education courses.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study involved the following activities:

1. The scope of the study was defined in conferences with the project coordinator and the executive staff of the Ohio Council on Vocational Education (OCOVE).

2. A meeting was held with the Director of the Division of Vocational and Career Education, Ohio Department of Education, to determine the rationale for adoption of the policy permitting credit-deficient 16-year-old students to enroll in job training programs.

3. All of the 103 Ohio Vocational Education Planning Districts were surveyed to ascertain the extent to which the policy had been implemented. (See the Appendix for a copy of the survey letter.)

4. A cross section of districts throughout Ohio was selected for further study. Included were districts that do not implement the policy as well as those that do.

5. Interview discussion guides were developed: (a) for districts implementing the policy, (b) for districts not implementing the policy, and (c) for individuals not associated with a particular district.

6. Interviews were held with officials of four large city, two medium-size independent city, and eight joint vocational districts that currently implement the policy.

7. Interviews were held with officials of two large city and four joint vocational districts that do not implement the policy.

8. Meetings or interviews were held with a variety of persons including past and present members of the Division of Vocational and Career Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction Emeritus (who is also Executive Director Emeritus of the Ohio Council on Vocational Education), school board members, and executive directors of state education management organizations.

9. To gain greater insight and additional perspective, meetings were held with representatives from vocational district home schools in a northern Ohio county. These schools send their vocational students to three different joint vocational schools. One discussion meeting was held with superintendents and principals from each of the home high schools. Another such meeting was held with the counselors from these schools.

10. Results of the meetings and interviews were synthesized by the project researcher and executive staff of OCOVE, and this report was then prepared for review by the members of the Ohio Council.

INTERVIEWS IN DISTRICTS THAT *ACCEPT* CREDIT-DEFICIENT STUDENTS

Fifty-four of the 70 responses from Ohio's 103 Vocational Education Planning Districts indicated that 16-year-old students with less than 11th-grade status are permitted to enroll in job training programs. An interview guide employing the following questions was used with officials in 14 of these districts. The answers represent general or consensus responses.

1. When did your district commence implementing this policy? Most districts could not cite a specific date. For the most part, they have accepted credit-deficient students for many years, even prior to 1981, when the policy was adopted by the Division of Vocational and Career Education.

2. How was the decision made to implement the policy? Generally, it was a cooperative decision involving home school and vocational school administrators. It is important to note that there is no generally applicable definition of 11th-grade status. One central Ohio JVS Supervisor of Student Services stated that "junior class status is based on home rule, and requirements vary from district to district, with the average being 8 to 9 credits."

3. What are the reasons for implementing the policy? The single most frequent response was to meet the needs of students, i.e., to keep students in school. It was also stated that accepting credit-deficient students was done to help offset declining enrollment. A JVS Superintendent in northern Ohio explained that his philosophy is "to serve students at all levels — to attempt to meet the needs of all students."

4. Since the policy was implemented, what is your estimate of the percentage of students enrolled in job training programs that were accommodated through this policy? The response to this question varied widely. After excluding students in Occupational Work Experience programs (OWE), estimates ranged from less than 1% to over 20%, with no particular pattern of districts at either end of the range. It was suggested by several persons that it would be helpful to have some abbreviated programs that could be offered on a one-semester or one-year basis.

5. Which job training programs seem to attract these students? Precise information was not readily available in most cases. The general opinion, however, is that credit-deficient students are most likely enrolled in trade and industry courses requiring manual skills orientation, food service, child care, and agriculture programs such as horticulture. In many districts these students are placed on a "space available" basis after fully qualified students have had an opportunity to enroll.

6. To what degree are these students successful in completing their job training programs? Again, precise information was not available. Responses ranged from "very few" to "most." One Director of Student Services expressed concern "that at age 18, many credit-deficient students will drop out or seriously consider dropping out of school."

7. To what degree are these students successful in completing their requirements for graduation? Responses varied from "very few" to "unsure" to "an estimated 90%." It is likely that success is somewhat related to available programs such as free summer school, before and after school classes, the options program, correspondence school, and flexibility within the regular school day curriculum. Some credit-deficient students eventually enroll in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program and/or seek a General Education Diploma (GED).

8. To what degree are these students successful in securing and retaining employment in their area of specialization? This information was generally unavailable. However, the consensus is that many students who complete the job training program and receive the vocational certificate are successful in securing and retaining jobs. A JVS Director pointed out "that a problem can arise when a student who has not completed the job training requirements leaves school and seeks employment, giving the impression that he or she has completed the program."

9. What are the perceived effects on the job training classes in which these students are enrolled? For the most part, it was felt that enrolling credit-deficient students had very little effect — that students are probably not aware of other students' official class standing. A Director in one district found "a very negative effect because certain classes were perceived as 'dumping grounds.'" Another stated that "individual teachers have a great deal to do with this potential problem."

10. What benefits — or problems — have resulted from these students' completing their job training programs prior to completing the requirements for graduation? Many persons believe strongly that developing a survival skill and becoming employable can be more important than receiving a high school diploma. A Vocational Director in an independent city district observed that "many credit-deficient students would not have completed the requirements for graduation if they had remained in the general education curriculum — so why not give them a chance to succeed?"

11. Has the policy had a generally positive or negative impact on vocational education? From the standpoint of providing opportunities for students, it is felt that the policy has had a positive impact on vocational education. However, accepting credit-deficient students increases the perception that vocational education is a dumping ground for less able students. A JVS Board Member called it a "real dilemma" and said, "On one hand, we are trying to serve students but at the same time, this effort compounds our image problem."

12. Do you believe the policy should be continued? Over three-fourths of the officials interviewed are of the opinion that the policy should be continued. Several persons in fact questioned what would happen to these students if they weren't provided an opportunity to enroll in job training programs.

13. What are the barriers that keep eligible students (age 16 with 11th-grade status) from enrolling in vocational education courses? See "Barriers to Enrollment in Vocational Education" on pages 13-15.

INTERVIEWS IN DISTRICTS THAT *DO NOT ACCEPT* CREDIT-DEFICIENT STUDENTS

Sixteen of the 70 responses from Ohio's 103 Vocational Education Planning Districts indicated that 16-year-old students with less than 11th-grade status are not permitted to enroll in job training programs. The following questions constituted the interview discussion guide that was used with officials in six of these districts. The answers represent general or consensus responses.

1. Has your district considered implementing this policy? Five of the six districts have discussed enrolling credit-deficient students in vocational education programs but have decided against it. In addition to providing OWE programs, some districts have accommodated these students through alternative schools and programs, such as those described on pp. 10-12.

2. How was the decision made not to implement the policy? For the most part, it was a joint decision by vocational and home school administrators. In one large city district, the decision rests entirely with the principals of the comprehensive high schools, thus resulting in an uneven administration of the policy. In one joint vocational district, an early decision was made by participating school and JVS board members and administrators to exclude credit-deficient students. This decision resulted in a JVSD board policy.

3. What are the reasons for not implementing the policy? Those who have opted not to implement the policy believe they are maintaining, even upgrading, the image of vocational education. They believe their graduates will have a better chance to succeed.

4. What happens to those students (age 16 with less than 11th-grade status) who are not permitted to enroll in job training programs? For those students not in OWE or in a special type of program, it was generally believed that the vocational school had no more responsibility than the home school. A southeast Ohio JVS Superintendent pointed out that "many students who do not succeed in general education will also not succeed in vocational education." Vocational education

"purists," on the other hand, are motivated primarily by a desire to protect the image and integrity of vocational education.

5. What are the barriers that keep eligible students (age 16 with 11th-grade status) from enrolling in vocational education courses? See "Barriers to Enrollment in Vocational Education" on pages 13-15.

OTHER INTERVIEWS

The following questions constituted the interview discussion guide that was used with persons not associated with a particular district. This group included past and present members of the State Department of Education and the Division of Vocational and Career Education. It also included persons who viewed the issue from a different perspective than those directly involved in vocational education. The answers represent general or consensus responses.

1. Are you aware of the policy permitting 16-year-old students with less than 11th-grade status to enroll in job training programs? Everyone responded in the affirmative.

2. Do you agree or disagree with this policy? There was general agreement with the policy, but a state school management association executive stated that "in all fairness, credit-deficient students must be accepted on a 'space available' basis."

3. What is your rationale for support of this policy? The first three items listed below were mentioned most often. The remaining items were each mentioned by one interviewee.

   - To help reduce the dropout rate.
   - To meet the needs of students who are not succeeding in general education programs.
   - To recognize that in some cases a survival skill may be more important than a high school diploma.
   - To meet the needs of industry.
   - To help counter declining enrollment in education and in vocational education.
   - To respond to pressure from home schools to lower the entry requirement from grade 11 to grade 9 or 10.
   - To help respond to the charge that schools are not responsive to the needs of all students.

4. What are the barriers that keep eligible students (age 16 with 11th-grade status) from enrolling in vocational education courses? See "Barriers to Enrollment in Vocational Education" on pages 13-15.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS FOR DEALING WITH CREDIT-DEFICIENT STUDENTS

The absence of a generally applicable definition of what constitutes 11th-grade standing or a credit-deficient student posed a unique challenge to this study. For the purposes of the study, a credit-deficient student was defined as one who is so lacking in credits that substantial course work would be necessary outside the school day or school year before the student could meet graduation requirements.

Philosophical positions vary widely regarding the best way to serve the credit-deficient student. Some school officials take the position that the home school is responsible for eliminating, or reducing to a manageable level, a student's deficiencies before the student is enrolled in a vocational education program. Proponents of this philosophy believe that such students will have a better chance to succeed in a job training program and be more likely to achieve a high school diploma. They also feel that this approach will enhance the image of vocational education and ultimately result in better qualified graduates.

Some of the philosophies and methods used by various Ohio school districts to deal with the issue of enrolling credit-deficient students in job training programs may be described as follows:

Occupational Work Experience (OWE) Programs

The target group of students for this study did not include OWE students. By the very nature of the program, OWE students have fallen behind in school. The objective of the OWE program is to concentrate on helping students develop good work habits and attitudes rather than to acquire specific job skills. Apparently some districts are utilizing OWE programs to enroll credit-deficient students who could profit from a regular job training program.

Transitional Program

One large JVS has developed a unique transitional program designed to help students bridge the gap from a credit-deficient, little-hope-for-success status to an opportunity to phase into a job training program with the possibility of earning a high school diploma.

Students in the transitional program are assigned for a half-day to a remedial setting in a self-contained classroom with a teacher who is certificated in English, mathematics, and social studies. The other half-day is spent in a vocational education exploratory program. Following successful completion of the transitional program, students may enroll in a regular two-year vocational education program.

Alternative Schools

Another approach used by some large city districts is to establish an alternative school to accommodate credit-deficient students. One district has an alternative high school designed for youth from 14-20 years of age who may have behavioral, truancy, disciplinary, or other social problems. These students are enrolled in a vocational class, an academic class, and a remedial class. A full range of support services, such as counseling and health services, is available.

This district also has an alternative program designed for individuals in the 16-21 age range who have previously dropped out and have chosen to return to school in a non-traditional setting. In this school, the instructional approach is highly individualized to meet the needs, abilities, and graduation requirements of each student. Support services are also available in this program.

Individualized Programming

This study detected a trend toward establishing a plan or program for individual students that will allow them, through a sequence of activities within a specified time, to obtain both a job training certificate and a high school diploma. Individualized planning may include a variety of programs, such as summer school, before or after school classes, tutoring, correspondence courses, or an additional semester or year. Ideally, the program would be developed cooperatively by the student, parents, and counselors from both the home school and vocational school.

Adult Basic Education

One JVS makes a concentrated effort to identify credit-deficient students who are likely to drop out of school on their 18th birthday. If it becomes evident that the student has decided to leave, an effort is made to enroll the student in the Adult Basic Education program and to help the student achieve a General Education Diploma (GED).

Additional Assistance for Special Needs Students

In one district, the Director indicated that a significant percentage of credit-deficient enrollment consists of handicapped or disadvantaged students. At this administrator's school, four support teachers rotate through the training programs to provide special assistance to students needing it. One of the support teachers works in the vocational lab, one helps in the "related" classroom with the teaching of technical information pertaining to the occupation, one assists in math, and the other in reading.

Special Job Training Programs

One JVS decided very early in its history to establish some modified job training programs in order to accommodate credit-deficient students. Because of declining enrollment, it has become necessary to eliminate some of these programs.

Flexible Junior Class Status

One city district indicated that students who had attended high school for two years were automatically placed in grade 11 regardless of the number of credits earned. This policy permitted credit-deficient students to be enrolled in job training programs.

Three-Year Programs

At least one urban district has found it beneficial to establish a three-year vocational high school. In this setting, students are able to coordinate academic requirements with the vocational curriculum over a longer period of time.

BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

This study was concerned primarily with credit-deficient students and the policy affecting their enrollment in job training programs.

While policy can be a barrier to the enrollment of these students, it is evident that there are barriers which prevent other fully eligible students from enrolling in job training programs. Enrollment of students in vocational education programs has been declining in recent years at a rate exceeding the decline of the student population in grades 11 and 12. This trend has caused much concern and has prompted considerable discussion about barriers that directly or indirectly influence vocational education enrollment. During the planning phase of this study, the Division of Vocational and Career Education requested that the researcher also try to identify barriers to enrollment of fully eligible students in job training programs.

Each of the three interview discussion guides employed in this study included the question "What are the barriers that keep eligible students (age 16 with 11th-grade status) from enrolling in vocational education courses?" The abbreviated responses and the number of districts listing each response are as follows:

- The reluctance of some students to leave home school friends and activities for a vocational program at a JVS. (12)
- Overselling of a college education, particularly to parents. (11)
- The negative image of vocational education. (10)
- Transportation issues such as time, distance, and availability. (9)
- The elitist, anti-vocational education attitude of some teachers, counselors and administrators. (8)
- Lack of cooperation by home school officials in providing all students access to vocational education personnel in order to secure information and orientation. (8)
- Excessive time requirements, particularly in "00 programs," which require 2½ hours of lab time, plus 2 class periods daily. (7)
- Job security for home school staff. (7)
- Increased requirements for a high school diploma. (6)
- Competition with some home school programs. (5)
- The need to make a commitment to a vocational program at an early age. (5)

- Emphasis on academics by national study commissions and the report of Ohio's Advisory Commission on Articulation Between Secondary Schools and Colleges. (4)
- Some disincentives in the state funding formula. (4)
- Declining school enrollment. (4)
- Excessive selectivity by some vocational education teachers. (4)
- A perception held by some persons that vocational schools have a concentration of problem students. (4)
- Poor promotion and recruitment efforts by vocational educators. (3)
- A feeling that some job training skills can be developed later in technical schools or in industry. (3)
- Inertia. (Students are comfortable with the present situation and see no reason to change.) (2)

On a related front, a task force appointed by Dr. Franklin B. Walter, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to study statewide vocational education enrollment trends, identified five conditions that affect public secondary enrollment patterns in Ohio. In its report, which was submitted to Dr. Walter in September, 1986, the task force cited the following conditions:

1. Declining student enrollment has resulted in directive counseling for the purpose of sustaining ongoing programs and staffing patterns.

2. Many parents and the public at large equate success in life with a college education, with little consideration to issues such as student interests, abilities, and employment opportunities.

3. Recurring educational reform movements have resulted in the perception that excellence in education requires a heavier emphasis on academic course work.

4. Media emphasis surrounding recent educational reform movements has helped to distort the public's views regarding education.

5. The current state funding formula may discourage freedom of choice and actually contribute to competition for students and programs.

Also relevant to this study is a special project conducted by the school districts of a northern Ohio county. The four high schools in these districts send their students to three different joint vocational schools. During a meeting involving guidance counselors of the four high schools, a concerted effort was made to identify the major barriers to enrolling students in vocational education. From their perspective, the home school counselors identified the five most significant barriers as:

1. In the minds of many students, vocational education has a highly negative image.

2. Students are reluctant to leave their home school friends and activities to embark on a new and perhaps unknown educational venture.

3. Many parents, except as a last choice option, are opposed to enrolling their children in vocational education programs.

4. The recent emphasis on academic course work has made it difficult for students to commit the time required for job training programs, particularly in the "00 programs," as defined on page 13.

5. Declining enrollment has added to the competition between the home school and vocational school for programs and for students.

It is significant to note that the home school counselors believe they are frequently placed in the very difficult position of attempting to balance the needs of students, the opinions of educators, and the wishes of parents.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Most vocational schools make an effort to accommodate credit-deficient students. Even those schools whose policy requires students to be at least 16 years of age with full 11th-grade class standing seem willing to consider credit-deficient students on an individual basis.

2. There is no generally applicable definition for "11th-grade class standing" or "credit-deficient student." This is complicated by the fact that the criteria may differ in various home schools within a joint vocational district.

3. Those who oppose enrolling credit-deficient students believe they are protecting the image of vocational education by avoiding the "dumping ground" syndrome and by producing better qualified graduates.

4. The primary reason offered for accepting credit-deficient 16-year-old students is to meet the needs of students, particularly those who might profit from a different kind of educational opportunity.

5. Another obvious reason for enrolling credit-deficient 16-year-old students is to counter problems caused by declining enrollment in vocational education.

6. Some districts with a policy to accept only students who have achieved 11th-grade status have relaxed their policy and now accept credit-deficient students on a "space available" basis. Other districts with an open-enrollment policy have found it desirable to tighten enrollment criteria.

7. Some persons believe the strength of a job training program lies in the instructional time allocated over a two-year period. However, this time commitment is now perceived by many educators as a major barrier to enrollment, particularly in the "00 type program," as defined on page 13.

8. There is support for offering "02 programs," which require two periods less time than "00 programs." In this approach, students would spend one-half day in the vocational program and the other half-day in the home school or comprehensive school setting. Advocates of this plan believe that in addition to softening some of the barriers to enrollment, the program can actually be more intensive than "00 programs" because better use is made of available time. Transportation time and distance are major obstacles in considering this option.

9. In some instances, it may be more important for a student with serious credit-deficiencies to work toward an employment survival skill than toward a high school diploma.

10. The Program Options-Applied Academics approach shows great promise in strengthening the academic components of vocational education programs and may help some credit-deficient vocational students meet graduation requirements.

11. One section of this report is devoted to identifying barriers to student enrollment in vocational education job training programs. If vocational education is to fulfill its mission, it will be necessary to eliminate or ameliorate as many of these barriers as possible.

12. Ohio has long been considered a national leader in vocational education. The 1987 Annual Report of the Ohio Council on Vocational Education states that 92.5% of the 1986 vocational education graduates available for employment were employed. This is particularly noteworthy when one considers that 18.8% of Ohio youth 21 years of age and under were unemployed.

13. A serious imbalance has developed regarding the number of students being prepared to enter the job market, as opposed to those enrolled in general education and college preparatory curriculums. In 1983, 41.8% of Ohio's juniors and seniors were enrolled in job training programs. By 1987, that number had slipped to 37.7%. Contrast these figures with an estimate by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services that by 1990 the work force in Ohio will require only 16.9% of its workers to have a four-year college degree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following two categories of recommendations are made by the researcher based upon findings, conclusions, and insights obtained in the course of the study. First are those that in the short term could provide important adjustments in understanding and in implementing vocational education programs. Second are long-range recommendations that are directed at the core of the problem — the matter of eliminating or ameliorating the barriers to students enrolling in secondary vocational education job training programs.

Short-Range Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. That vocational educators continue to expand their recent efforts to strengthen the academic component of the vocational education curriculum. (Note: A similar recommendation is included in the 1988 recommendations of the Ohio Council on Vocational Education to the State Board of Education.)

2. That the Division of Vocational and Career Education, Ohio Department of Education, experiment with some abbreviated programs of one year or one semester duration for credit-deficient 16-year-old students and for those who missed an earlier opportunity to enroll in vocational education programs.

3. That a policy be established making it mandatory for every vocational education student with a credit deficiency to have his/her program reviewed at regular intervals to assure progress toward graduation and acquisition of suitable occupational skills.

Long-Range Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. That the Ohio Department of Education initiate follow-up studies for all students, including vocational education graduates, graduates of the general education curriculum, college preparatory students, and those who leave high school prior to meeting the requirements for graduation. The focus of these follow-up studies would be to determine success rates in the world of work and/or in the pursuit of further education. Such studies are essential for evaluating the opportunities now available to secondary school students.

2. That the Ohio Department of Education take appropriate action to eliminate specific enrollment barriers associated with funding disincentives, competition for students, and approval of similar or duplicate programs in both comprehensive high schools and vocational schools.

3. That the Division of Vocational and Career Education intensify efforts to identify and publicize individual case histories of successful vocational students as a means of improving the public image of vocational education.

4. That the Ohio Board of Education establish a Statewide Select Committee on Vocational Education Enrollment. The mission of the Committee would be to eliminate or ameliorate the barriers associated with vocational education enrollment. The committee should be broad based, and its membership would include, but not be limited to, students, parents, media, school administrators, teachers, counselors, and school board members. (Note: This recommendation is consistent with the Ohio Council's 1988 recommendation relative to implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy.)

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APPENDIX

OCOVE Ohio Council on Vocational Education
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Council

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Dr. Martin W. Essex
Executive Director Emeritus

DATE: August 7, 1987

MEMO TO: Superintendents, Ohio Vocational Education Planning Districts

FROM: David B. Martin, OCOVE Research Consultant

SUBJECT: Request for Information

As you know, the Division of Vocational and Career Education adopted a policy in 1981 permitting students who are sixteen years of age, but who have not achieved eleventh grade class standing, to enroll in job training programs.

The Ohio Council on Vocational Education is engaging in a research project to determine the impact of this policy. Our first step is to determine how widely the policy has been implemented. We will then conduct the study in selected districts.

We would appreciate it if you would respond to the following questions and return this form in the enclosed envelope at your earliest convenience. The results of the study will, of course, be made available to you.

1. Have any of your students, who were 16 years old or older, and who had not yet achieved 11th grade standing, been enrolled in job training programs?

2. If the answer is Yes, please list the school(s) in which the students were enrolled. (Use back of form if necessary).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

Name of person supplying this information:

_____ Tel. No. _____

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